

Public Participation

Item 25-0919 Approve Oklahoma Street Asphalt Reconstruction Design

Common Council

Wed, Aug 20, 2025 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 08:31

Next, I have no business to present to you this evening, so we come now to a time of public participation. At each meeting of the common council, the council dedicates 30 minutes of time to public comment on items that appear on the agenda. We ask that you keep your comments concise and to the point, and, again, only on items that appear on the agenda. Public Participation is limited to a maximum of five minutes per person, and we will help you keep time. I'll give you a reminder with about 30 seconds remaining as time expires. And with that, we'll get started. We have, let's see, six members of the public signed up to speak, and we'll take these up in the order in which you signed up. Everyone is here to speak on the same item. First is Sarah Leet. Welcome Sarah. If you'd state your name and address for the record again, please.

Sarah Leet (Resident) 09:21

My name is Sarah Leet. I live at [XXXXXX] West Oklahoma Street. I [unclear] my 1937 home since 2012. As I begin my statements as well at the last two municipal services committee meetings, I would like to reiterate my thanks to the city staff, including Director Jungwirth, engineers Brown and Lom, Forrester Stanonik, and others for taking the time to answer questions in advance of this meeting. I would also like to thank Alderpersons Fenton, Jones, and Martin for attending our block party two weeks ago and listening to the concerns of Oklahoma street residents, and for Mayor Woodford for meeting with a handful of neighbors to listen to our concerns. I trust that those who are unable to attend the initial two municipal services committee meetings have taken the time to view those meetings in preparation for tonight's discussion.

Sarah Leet (Resident) 10:09

You've heard a number of times about the lack of communication on this project and the compressed timeline. This cannot be emphasized enough, and is completely unacceptable. For me, personally, while a number of questions have been answered, there are still quite a few questions that remain outstanding. While the list is long, some key questions include, how does narrowing the street make it safer for bikers, especially children? If the council insists on 26 feet, is alternate parking an option? What is the cost difference? If APD's number one complaint is speeding, why hasn't the city considered changing the speed limit on residential streets to 20 miles per hour? What prevented public works from submitting this for approval sooner, especially given that there is a five-year plan? How long would it take engineering to do a more robust parking study on our block with appropriate documentation, given that the details are not available from the initial one? Why aren't citizens' observations of congested parking considered relevant data? Why did our report show no known crashes when there was a documented crash? Why isn't there an update on the Complete Streets policy when an annual report was agreed to be published, and it has been nearly 18 months? Why were we asked to sign the sewer agreement before tonight's vote?

Sarah Leet (Resident) 11:32

Responses from City Hall have all but come to a standstill this past week. This has been exasperated by the number of staff on vacation this week, including Director Jungwirth and engineer Lom and the lack of available staff to answer questions in their stead. I ask you to keep this in mind as you deliberate. I also ask you to consider if you have had time to receive complete answers to all of your questions. It has been observed that this is a once in a 75-to-100-year decision. It deserves due diligence.

Sarah Leet (Resident) 12:03

Hopefully you have had a chance to review the petition in your packet. As I stated last time, I'm confident that had I had more time, additional signatures have been collected. While it is in your packet, I'd like to read it for the record. "We the residents and homeowners of West Oklahoma street petition the municipal services committee and the City Council of the City of Appleton, Wisconsin to vote to maintain the current width of our street for the purposes of preserving parking options on both sides of the street. Our street needs—excuse me—needs sufficient parking options. As with most households, residents having two or three cars is common. However, being an older neighborhood, houses have single lane driveways and often single car garages requiring parking on the street. Home improvement contractors and delivery drivers frequently block part of the street. Parking is not available on Richmond Street or Mason Street, and parking needs from those streets belong to our street. students from Appleton West High School Park on our street. Current parking rules such as the two-hour time limitation, overnight parking restrictions, and providing proper egress to driveways are not being enforced. These issues will be exasperated by narrowing the street and limiting parking to only one side of the street. We are deeply saddened that a minimum of 41 trees will be lost on our street. However, by signing below, we indicate our support for maintaining the current width of our street to preserve our parking options with the full understanding that to do so, an additional 13 trees will need to be removed." The petition, as in your packet, has 48 signatures. At a minimum, I ask you to evaluate your decision by viewing Oklahoma Street in two segments that west of story Street and that east of—

Mayor Jake Woodford 13:54

About 30 seconds remaining.

Sarah Leet (Resident) 13:56

I will skip that. By now it is clear that it [...] a vote that will have consequences that reverberate past Oklahoma street. You can expect continuing questions and concerns over the next 24 months. I will not reiterate all of my prior comments about my frustration and indeed anger surrounding the communication related to this proposal, but I will say that my initial opinion has not changed. In my—you have all failed in your duties to be a partner to the residents of Oklahoma street. Tonight, you all have the chance to seal that assessment or show your leadership in making the best decision, both for Oklahoma Street and for the city. Affirm the recommendation of the municipal services committee to deny the project as proposed by the Public Works staff. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mayor Jake Woodford 14:37

Next is Maureen Wallenfang. Welcome Maureen.

Maureen Wallenfang (Resident) 14:43

Thank you. Maureen Wallenfang, [XXXXX] West Oklahoma Street. I live eight houses east of Mason Street, and that's just west of West High School—or east of West High School. My husband has lived here in this house for 40 years—almost 40 years—and me, 27. We stayed on Oklahoma Street for the charm, the character, and the canopy of trees. It's a beautiful place to live. Now we're facing street reconstruction that will take out 50% of our trees, 50% of our parking, plus it will cost each household almost \$3,000 for laterals that's not covered by the wheel tax or property tax.

Maureen Wallenfang (Resident) 15:28

We understand that our 100-year-old street desperately needs new infrastructure. We understand that many trees have to go in the reconstruction, and we mourn their loss. The only thing we think we have a say in is the width of the street. We want to keep it wide. It is slated L2 in Complete Streets, which would narrow it to be 26

feet wide, and only one side will have parking, but there is an L1 option, keeping the street at 32 feet and keeping parking on both sides. We've tried to get our voices heard on this. We've gone to the municipal services committee twice. Nine residents spoke at each meeting, the majority asking to keep our street wide. There were some other opinions. Some of us have met with you, the mayor, the forester, the arborist, our alderperson, the city engineer and the project engineer. We reached out to each of them. There was no meeting before we got our first letter.

Maureen Wallenfang (Resident) 16:47

48 residents signed the petition that Sarah was talking about that would keep the width of the street as is. It's attached to your agenda, as she mentioned. The municipal services committee approved an amendment to keep our street at 32 feet, the L1 option. And we thought, "Great." But then, for some reason that we can't really figure out, they voted to deny its recommendation to you, the Common Council.

Maureen Wallenfang (Resident) 17:22

I urge you to vote yes on the amended proposal, which keeps the street at 32 feet. If you want to calm traffic add a speed bump; it works on Lawrence Street. If the project is delayed, please freeze the \$3,000 that we have to pay for laterals. We shouldn't be penalized for any delay. In the future, please give residents more than two weeks' notice on life altering changes like this. Hold a meeting with residents to explain the project. That wasn't done. Consider that Complete Streets may not be the best for old neighborhoods. With the narrow driveways and many one-car garages we need on street parking. Also consider that Complete Streets doesn't fit neighborhoods around a high school. Students take up much of our street parking on the school days, as is; it would be worse with one sided parking.

Maureen Wallenfang (Resident) 18:33

If you decide to narrow our street, please extend the parking restrictions on our street and enforce them. Right now, for example, overnight parking is banned, but it's not enforced. It's already a struggle to get city services like snow removal, leaf pickup, and street cleaning because of overnight parking and student parking, and this proposal at 26 feet will just make it worse. Thank you for listening.

Mayor Jake Woodford 19:12

Next is Mark Wallenfang. Welcome.

Mark Wallenfang (Resident) 19:17

Hi. I'm Mark Wallenfang, [XXXXX] West Oklahoma Street. I just want to reiterate what my wife had said about narrowing the street. Currently the way it is now, at 32 feet, when we have a snowfall with the cars parked there overnight, the snow plows cannot get through, and we'll have six seven feet of snow extended from my driveway because the plow had to go around those vehicles. I have a snow plow truck I use for my business. I have to come back with my truck and clean out my driveway, and I shouldn't have to do that.

Mark Wallenfang (Resident) 19:51

So, another issue is with the city services of leaf removal that pile—we've had snow falls where there's still leaves on the ground, and that's on—the snow is on top of the leaves. That gets plowed, and it just makes a mess of everything. And going down to the narrow—narrowing the street, I don't know how we would get down the street as is with—after the snow plow comes through, because it's just—there's 18 inches on either side that doesn't meet the side, the curb, and that's going to be one lane all the way down with the cars that are parked on the street. We really need to have that wit. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 20:34

All right next, believe someone here by proxy for a Royalene—sorry if I'm—Royalene Trader, so come on up and....

Sarah Leet (Resident) 20:46

Royalene Trader [XXXXX] West Oklahoma Street was unable to attend this evening and asked me to read a brief statement on her behalf: "I do have a question regarding the city staff observing our street, stating 10 to 15 times different times during the weekday, I have observed parking on our street is much busier in the evening and weekends. Have they also observed those times???" Three question marks. "Most people work during the day. Again, single driveways, most families have more than one car!!" Two exclamation points. "A wider road will be much more safe for our neighborhood!!" Two exclamation points. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 21:27

Next is Ruth Foss. Welcome.

Ruth Foss (Resident) 21:34

Hello, I'm Ruth Foss, and I live at [XXXXX] West Oklahoma Street, and for the people that have already heard me several times, these are the pictures of our street. [...]

[She walks away from the microphone to hand out pictures of Oklahoma Street.]

Ruth Foss (Resident) 21:48

[...] important for the safety of the kids riding. Parking has been an issue. We're a little bit further down than—we're about halfway down towards Story Street. But here's a question I have to ask you. Have you ever had people over to your home and they needed to park on the street? Raise your hand. Have you?

Mayor Jake Woodford 22:36

During public comment, we don't have exchanges.

Ruth Foss (Resident) 22:39

Well, okay, I'm just asking, you know, because, because, you know, within the narrow driveways, it's very hard to be able to have people over, and we park on the street, and to have two-sided parking is very important.

Ruth Foss (Resident) 22:53

And also, I'm looking behind you, Mayor Whitford—Woodford, and I see the trees. And I know I've brought this up a lot, but all of you know that Appleton is called Tree City, and all of those beautiful trees that you see in those pictures? They'll all be taken down—all of them. And how many of you like to walk on a street without any shade—none, none at all? And we'll have the hot west sun pouring down from West High School way. It's just really hard. I feel like there's not a win/win situation at all. I feel the same as some of the other people that have spoken that, you know, to get slapped with the letter, "Hey, your streets going to get done. Your—all of your trees are going to go, and you have to pay." And we've lived there for 38 years, 38 years, my whole married life, and I just feel really sad. It will not be the same. I'm 62 years old, and then you get a little tree planted in front of your house. How long does that take to grow? I'll be dead. Most of us will be dead by the time that the trees grow.

Ruth Foss (Resident) 24:21

I know things have to be done, but two weeks when this has been worked on and worked on and worked on in the past, and then put aside and put aside and put aside, and then we get the letter two weeks ahead. And, yes,

this is the third time a lot of us have spoken about this. So just really think, would you want to live in a neighborhood with no trees? Would you want to park on only one side? Would you—would you gather your friends and your family to say, "OK, you have to be number two. Now everybody has to pull out of the driveway so that you can get into the driveway." So just really think and just please consider our beautiful neighborhood. Mark Wallenfang said something at our block party; we always sing the old Mr. Rogers. So, I'm asking you, you know, it's a beautiful neighborhood, would you be our neighbors and make good decisions? Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 25:26

Next is Christine Williams. Welcome.

Christine Williams (Resident) 25:29

Hi, thank you. My name is Christine Williams. I'm at [XXXXX] West Oklahoma Street. Proud—proudly the best street in Appleton for 26 years. I would ask that you keep the street at 32. I'm a tree hugger, going to Glacier in three weeks, gonna hug those trees. We can never get—once we go narrow, we will never go wide again. And so, I'm looking at this as something not for me, but for the next generation of people who live on the street, and also being an advocate for all streets in Appleton that are old neighborhood streets.

Christine Williams (Resident) 26:27

You approved Complete Streets. I was on council for six years, 2014 to '20—10, in the great district of 10, and I had not heard of Complete Streets being approved in Appleton. I had heard rumblings of things in other communities. That was my mistake for not knowing about this. I don't think Complete Streets are a good idea at all. I think they're fine on well-traveled streets—Oneida Street, or a College Avenue. I don't I don't see a reason for this to be done on a residential street. All of these folks have said that we have single car driveways, and we have that because our houses were built in 1920, 1930, 1940. In some cases, people didn't have cars. They still had horse and buggies. So, we're talking 100 years ago.

Christine Williams (Resident) 27:30

We need to do better as a city, to have meetings for neighbors. Not too many years ago, when we were doing meetings for new for new streets, reconstructions of the street, we brought together the forester, the Public Works, the traffic engineering, and our neighbors—some we knew, some we didn't—to view large maps on the walls, and had the ability to chat not only with the staff, but with the whole project in a non-committee setting. Covid was the reason, given that we don't do that anymore. Covid is over. Then they said the reason we don't do this is because people don't attend meetings anymore, because we have the wheel tax, and I was part of the wheel tax. Glad that I voted yes for that.

Christine Williams (Resident) 28:23

However, if you are going to go from downtown—and I consider us downtown—downtown streets that are 100 years old, and try to go down to 26 feet, and have all of these streets now have parking on one side, you are going to have a deluge of people just like us coming to your meeting and telling you should have had a meeting before. Go back to how you had the meetings. They are—they are very important, not only for the residents, but to hear—for the Public Works and everybody else to hear the needs of the public. And I had attended those meetings when I was on council, and they did work. We all received a letter just two weeks ago. Again, that needs to be 3, 4, 5, or more weeks. You've known about this for a long time. It is, it is a disservice to only have that at two weeks.

Christine Williams (Resident) 29:18

The other the other issue that I wanted to mention is the lack of enforcement of parking on residential streets. And when I say that, I want to call it active enforcement, when you had a CSO or had had a police officer who

drove around and gave tickets. I was also a police officer for many years in in Town of Menasha, and I loved running parking tickets. 3:30 in the morning, it kept me awake time after time. I understand being on City Council, that this council and the one before and the one before that, and going back many, many times, has not given enough money to the police department. They have to beg for equipment. They have to before for more—

Mayor Jake Woodford 30:07

About 30 seconds remaining

Christine Williams (Resident) 30:10

—staff, and they're not getting it. So, I understand that in the middle of the night, we don't have the staff, the police staff, to issue tickets. However, we now have parking lots in front of people's houses where people will park at night and they will not move it anymore. So, unless we have enforcement, this is—the Complete Street and half the parking isn't going to work either. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 30:38

That concludes the list of folks who signed up, but we—I'll just check. We had a sign-up sheet in the back. Is there anybody else would like to speak on an item that appears on the agenda? Didn't have a chance to sign up, but would still like to speak? Please. Please state your name and address for the record and the item you're speaking on.

Julie Filapek (Resident) 31:00

Yeah. Julie Filapek. I live at [XXXXX] West Oklahoma Street. I'm speaking on the same issue the others. I guess, just the two things I would like to add to it. I'm also trying to understand the import of Complete Streets for a street like ours. I have some planning background myself. I studied the Complete Streets policy to some extent. So, I'm not an expert, but I do—my sense of things from conversations I've had is that the immediate reasons for doing this on a street like ours have to do with the fact that it will cost less to narrow the street. That's something that I've learned, and also that it's about speed of traffic. And I understand that there's research out there and that generally narrower streets will slow will slow traffic, but I also know that there are more elements to that than just the width of the street. It also has to do with how much traffic is coming toward you, so you will slow down more if there's more traffic going—coming in the other direction and it's narrow because you have to pass people. That will not be the case on a street like ours, where there's not, you know, that much traffic.

Julie Filapek (Resident) 32:18

I also know from just being someone who works in neighborhoods—specifically, for this purpose, the historic central neighborhood where Clark Street is—I've had people tell me that people speed down Clark Street. So, I just, I just want you to be aware that I don't I don't know that narrowing is necessarily going to immediately fix and completely fix the problem of speeding traffic. And so, I just, I want you to weigh the value of this policy against the fact that neighbors are saying that this is going to impact them negatively. And just really make a good decision about whether it's really worthwhile in this, in this particular case, and in these kinds of cases with these kinds of streets. Thanks.

Mayor Jake Woodford 33:03

All right. I'll ask again, is there anyone who'd like to speak on an item that appears on the agenda? We—okay, come on forward. Your name and address for the record and the item you're speaking on.

Daniel Ferdon (Resident) 33:17

Daniel Ferdon, [XXXXXX] West Oklahoma street. I actually wasn't going to talk tonight, because I figured I'd said enough last time, but I didn't want to point out a couple things. You go south of Wisconsin, walk down Summit, and look both directions, there are absolutely no shade bearing trees provided by the city. But those trees are there. They're just on private property. Anyone on Oklahoma street also has the option to plant their own trees so that they can have their own shade that they control. That's not something dictated by the city.

Daniel Ferdon (Resident) 33:46

I'd also like to comment that parking enforcement—how does a civilian judge parking enforcement when vehicles can be called in and they have no access to that to know if a vehicle has been called in and is legally parked at night?

Daniel Ferdon (Resident) 34:04

The third thing I wanted to point out is I work from home. My office faces the streets. I see the speeders. I see how many people there are. I see how many cars are parked on our street all day, every day, year after year, and a lot of what's being said is hyperbole at best. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 34:26

Anyone else who missed the sign-up sheet? Please come forward. Your name and address for the record and the item you're speaking on, please

Reive Pullen (Resident) 34:38

Good evening. My name is Reive Pullen. Address is [XXXXXX] North Richmond Street, 54911. Same item as everybody else. Thanks for allowing me the time to speak. Essentially the concerns that I have, I attended the committee meeting previously, and just some of the general items, I understand there's a lot of good intent that people have behind what's going on and the issues that we're facing. Obviously, it's not an easy situation. In terms of the safety that I heard, as a resident, obviously, I said Richmond Street, but I'm a corner house, so I do have Oklahoma there, and this project will affect me, but my regular commute goes from Richmond to Mason every day, back and forth on Oklahoma Street. And one of, what I would say is probably the biggest concern from a safety standpoint, is traffic that is coming north and south on all the cross streets that do not stop for the yield signs, that do not stop for the stop signs. So, I—and I, again, I understand it's coming from good intent, but if we truly are—you know, if safety is the biggest concern, I think we really need to think about what is happening with that, as well as trap traffic calming.

Reive Pullen (Resident) 35:47

You know, I understand there are studies that say, on the one—you know, you just have traffic narrowed and have parking only on the one side, that that can have positive effects. However, some of the studies that I've looked at also include having the street essentially weave so you've got one block, you've got parking on one side, then the next block is parking on the other side. This plan that we have, you know, that we're discussing, does not have that. It's just straight all the one way. And I spoke to the engineer previously about this, you know, couple weeks ago.

Reive Pullen (Resident) 36:18

The other thing I would say, understand, obviously, the from the green side of things, of you know, losing the trees, losing the shade, I completely understand, and I get that that can honestly be frustrating. It's going to for people that have, you know, rely on that shade, that's going to increase utility bills, even with heating of house, as well as just making things a little bit less comfortable. You know me personally, my biggest concern is the fact of the, you know, down the road, and this was mentioned the committee meeting, is 75 years from now. That

was the specific number that was brought up. What's going to happen 75 years from now? And we need to think about the people that are going to be living here in 75 years. And that is what my concern is, primarily. You know, how easily utilized is it going to be to get down the street? And at the same time, you know, mention kids, you know, and young families living in the area.

Reive Pullen (Resident) 37:10

You know, I understand, and I get that there are studies—I'm not, I'm not going to say that there aren't—that says a narrow street is going to be safer. But at the same time, you know, I previously worked in law enforcement. You know, one of the things that was brought up is that it's going to be more expensive to patrol the streets. It could cause more accidents from cars being on both sides, but at the same time, the city now has the ability to ticket twice as many cars that are parked overnight on the street, which—not that I agree with that, but from a financial perspective, that's going to be a factor to consider as well, and also the fact that you only have the traffic on the one side, and now it's a little bit more narrowed, and it's—pretty much it's just a straight away. You know, especially for with the street being more narrow, we're painting the lines, whereas right now, we have nothing. Personally, when I've got a car coming, and I've got vehicles parked on both sides of the street currently at 32 feet, I don't pass. I wait for, you know, the next person to come, just because it is, it does still feel narrow, trying to drive through and go side by side while you've got cars parked on both sides. So, for me, personally, with my driving, it causes me right now to slow down.

Reive Pullen (Resident) 38:18

The other thing that I would say too, is you have—you know, you've got car spaced out currently in both sides of the road. It's a lot easier to see around them and see kids and whatnot if you're worried about kids starting out in the street, you box everything up. Where now you've got one side that's fully consolidated with all the vehicles, you're not going to be able to see as easily on that side. Sure, it's going to make it a lot easier and safer for kids that are on the other side of the street to cross. I fully get that, but you're also creating blind spots, and there are some other problems that can be caused by that.

Reive Pullen (Resident) 38:48

Also, for the green side of things—and I guess I'll finish with this. I understand the concerns with that. My biggest concern, primarily, is just to not narrow the street. Personally, I would be willing to, as a resident that lives, you know, again Richmond, but Oklahoma Street, to personally volunteer my time—

Mayor Jake Woodford 39:06

30 seconds remaining.

Reive Pullen (Resident) 39:08

Again, from the green standpoint, I would be willing to help the city volunteer my time to plant 10 trees for every tree we have to remove. My biggest concern is just not narrowing the street and making sure that we have things more utilizable for people in the future, and I'd be willing to spend my time to make sure that can happen. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 39:28

Is there anyone else would like to speak on an item that appears on the agenda? Seeing none we'll close public participation.

[Cut]

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:56

We're going to take up the item from municipal services committee, and I'm going to save the council a procedural step here by bringing this forward as a vote not withstanding. And so, what that means is that, what—if there are no objections, what that means is that the council will take up the item as recommended, as amended at committee, so notwithstanding the denial vote that came out of committee, meaning that, as it as it would currently stand, what you're taking up is the item as amended. An aye vote would approve. A nay vote would deny. Everybody clear on how we're doing that? Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 41:19

Point of honor, Your Honor. So, you said the item is amended. The amendment to change the width of the street failed two to three. So, what we are bringing—what the committee was bringing, to council, is a recommendation to deny the original design proposal. And I'm looking at Attorney Behrens for clarification on that.

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:00

Attorney Berens.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 42:01

I believe the amendment passed three to two.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 42:05

Okay.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 42:06

The item as amended failed two to three.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 42:09

I'm reading it incorrectly. I apologize, but I—so...okay. That is—I apologize. That is absolutely not how I remember it.

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:27

Okay. Are there any objections to taking it up, notwithstanding, as amended at committee? Hearing none, that's how we'll begin the discussion. Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 42:46

Thank you. I would like to make a motion at this time to replace the item back to the original 26 feet as proposed by staff initially.

Mayor Jake Woodford 43:02

We have a motion and a second. I want to be clear for the record, that would include all of the recommendations in the staff memo associated with this item. Is that correct?

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 43:13

Yes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 43:14

Okay, thank you, and the seconder agrees? Okay. Thank you. We have a motion and a second to amend by substitution. We'll open discussion on the amendment by substitution. First is Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 43:30

Sorry, chair. So, I was in the queue to speak on the amended item. During the municipal services meeting, as I was watching it, I got a little confused with what was going on and needed to clarification on what the amended item was, and that is not in our minutes. So, in order to vote on changing it back, I still need to know exactly what the details of the amended version is.

Mayor Jake Woodford 43:56

The amendment was to install a roadway at thirty—at a 32-foot width. The amendment was approved at committee per the legislative history.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 44:07

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 44:12

Alder Jones.

Aldersperson Vaya Jones (District 10) 44:16

Thank you, Chair. Lot of words. This has been a very emotional, intense process, I think, for all of the residents, and I have a lot more words to say on the next vote. However, I really wanted to vote for this amendment because I was worried that it was either go back to the original plan or no project. And it was under my impression that we need this done. We need the road done. We need the laterals done. They're 100 years old, and so I was going to vote yes if this was amended and support it. However, I have since heard from constituents that they would much rather see the project postponed than to go through without their questions asked, without a lot of things. So, I will be voting no to amend this, and that's kind of the reasoning for it.

Mayor Jake Woodford 45:19

See Alder Hartzheim wanted to speak. Oh, okay, a phantom flash card. Forgive me. Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 45:29

Thank you. At committee, I think that we tried very hard to be very, very thorough. I think also that the outcome that we got at the end of the last municipal services committee was not what I was looking for, and I think not the direction that my colleagues wanted to go. I feel that delaying the project is absolutely not acceptable, and I also feel that the original proposal from staff has a lot of value. I think that the exploration of what it would look like to keep the street at its current width—especially upon reflection after the meeting and after speaking to some residents of Oklahoma street, I feel that keeping the street at its current width causes problems, especially if we are looking at a timeline. My colleague, Alder Firkus, is not here today, but something he said at committee really stuck with me. Are we—are we really thinking in the long term? Are we really thinking about, you know, 75 years from now, and I think that narrowing the street is the right way to go for this. I encourage my colleagues to support the amendment. I think that we have been very, very diligent with exploring all of the alternatives. And I do think that the original proposal from staff is the best one.

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:03

Alder Smith.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 47:06

Thank you, Your Honor. Listening to comments and then getting out onto Oklahoma myself to take a look, I can see that the street needs an update. The utility laterals, that's not as evident to the eye, but I also think that's a—clear that that needs to be upgraded. So, there's a lot of good here for Oklahoma Street.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 47:30

One question I have—and let me kind of start by saying I really like the idea of the Complete Streets, and I've talked to Eric Lom about some of the policies related to how we design streets, and I think that's all carefully thought through. So, I'm, I am a proponent of having a kind of uniform look and standards for our streets that get that get supplied. I was curious and wonder if there's anyone who could answer my question about Elsie is just parallel to Oklahoma, and that has been fairly recently redone, and is that it's that—it still has parking on both sides, but is that 32 feet? I'm just wondering if I could—I think that was done before the Complete Streets agreement, but I'd like to get some clarity, if I could about Elsie, the—about the dimensions of Elsie, I guess.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:32

Okay, Deputy Director Neuberger, is that something that we can obtain tonight. Your mic, which mic? Okay. Go ahead.

Deputy Director Pete Neuberger (Public Works) 48:40

Thank you, Mayor. Yes, I'll look it up and I'll provide that information yet tonight, and it was before the Complete Streets policy was adopted.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 48:51

If that has parking on both sides, would I would—my assumption would be that is a 32 foot street that was maintained? 31? Okay.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:04

We'll get that figure for you though. Alder Wolff.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 49:10

Thank you, Chair. I'm going to ask my colleagues to vote against this amendment. I think the amended version actually keeps [the width?] which I'm supporting in this situation. Yeah, thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:26

Alder Fenton,

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 49:29

Thank you, Your Honor. And apologies. I remember correctly I was just reading the agenda incorrectly and wrote about it this afternoon. So, apologies for the Foot in Mouth Disease. I would encourage my colleagues to vote for the amendment here to go with the original design. The Complete Streets policy wasn't just something that the Council adopted without any thought. There's a lot of research by professionals that went into this and the incidents of crashes. And I was reading one today that came from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, where they studied 1,117 streets in seven different cities and found overwhelmingly that narrowing lanes in a street decreased the number of accidents and decreased pedestrian casualties and they were careful to examine all sorts of streets, neighborhood streets. What they did leave out was highways and rural roads, which obviously have a need for wider.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 50:48

So, we heard a lot of talk about trees in both the public hearing on the design and in the municipal Services Committee, and yet again tonight. But in addition to saving the—is the 13 trees that would be saved by narrowing the street to the this amount. It's not just the looks. Those trees are important for stormwater retention. They're for top soil runoff into the street. They're important for, a lot of people have mentioned, the shade in terms of keeping utility bills down. So, I think with the Complete Streets policy, I'm not sure that we should adopt a policy, and then every other design we do, we should go against the policy. If we've adopted a policy, we should continue with that policy.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 51:51

And then, very briefly and kind of as an homage to Alder Croatt, who reminded—who is absent, is excused tonight, but reminded us that there is a cost difference in making these decisions, and in the economy today, cities have to buy asphalt and labor and other components, just like households do. So, we have to make that consideration, and in an era where there are no assessments for street reconstruction, we are asking that the citizen—all of the citizens of Appleton, all of the property taxpayers, pay that difference, so that the people who live in one neighborhood or on one street still get to keep their parking. And I don't think that that's the kind of decisions that we need to be making as a council. So again, I urge people to vote to restore the original design plan and also vote for that when it comes to pass. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 53:03

Alder Meltzer.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 53:05

Thank you. I believe that parking on only one side of the street will alleviate a lot of the parking congestion that residents have spoken about. I believe that a narrower street will slow speeding. We have a five-year plan. There are many, many streets that are sort of vying for the honor of being the streets that we're taking up in any given year. We as a council don't get to consider the design and still the—until the street is brought to municipal services committee agenda. So, I think, given the time that we have had available to us, I think that we definitely have to rely and respect the judgment and the decision making that staff does as the experts.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 53:51

Another thing, the narrow streets saving the construction costs. Those costs, as my colleague Alder Fenton mentioned, those costs come from all of the taxpayers, and I think that it is very important for us to be fiscally prudent about that aspect of this project. So, I think that also the 13 trees, and we haven't heard as much tonight about the trees, but at the previous municipal services committees, the trees were mentioned repeatedly. I have heard from residents outside of the committee about trees as well, and I think that being able to save those additional 13 trees is going to make a very long-term difference for the for the shade, for the walkability, for the, what they describe as, the character of the neighborhood. I think that when we already have to have so many trees come down in a project, to lose those additional 13 trees would be very harmful for the neighborhood. So just with the attitude of foresight, again, I implore my colleagues to support my amendment back to the original design. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 55:05

Alder Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 55:08

Thank you, Mayor. Just briefly speaking to the amendment only, I think this decision tonight, which we'll eventually get to, is challenging for all of us who are sitting in this chamber because we hear the neighbors'

concerns. A lot of us empathize with the situation they're in. And when you're living in a home for decades and raising families there, you get used to a certain life along a street, and then you're hit with this abrupt change. And I've been through it myself, but I can, I can, I can sense it. I can, I can empathize, because I understand what it means.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 55:44

But I think I will be voting in favor of the revision when we get to that, because it really comes down to work that will have to be done eventually, whether we do it this year, next year, five years, or 10 years out. The cost only increases, and we know what that cost looks like if we wait, and even if we were to approve a 32 street feet street with curb to curb, that's an additional 160,000 give or take, which is a significant cost to the city and taxpayers.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 56:19

I mean, I love saving 13 trees, but originally, I was in favor of keeping the street wide with the notion that maybe there were some opportunities in between that we could do something to help slow traffic. But in the process of deliberation and hearing from staff, really those options don't exist. And so we're really left with do we leave it wide, lose all the trees, and take on an additional 160,000 in cost to build the street at its current width, or do we reduce it, get some traffic flowing remediation, save some trees, open up one side of the street for maybe some a little bit ease—easier snow plowing, leaf removal and street cleaning if that side is clear of overnight parked cars? And so that's the decision we're faced with. It's not easy for any of us. My gut wants to go with the community, because I hear their concerns, but I also have to respect that we have really good staff, and they do significant—or really deep dives on these projects. None of these decisions are made lightly. So, I guess I would encourage us all to vote in favor of moving this amendment forward and getting to the original Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 57:34

Alder Hayden.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 57:34

Thank you, Chair. I empathize with everybody who's come here to speak tonight, because every April I attempt to park in this neighborhood as that's the weekend that they have the dance recital at Appleton West. And I think half the city descends upon your neighborhood and it's incredibly hard to find parking. So, I hear what you're saying. But when it comes to a vote, I think I try to be consistent in everything I'm doing, and I think following the what staff has recommended is probably the best thing to do in this case. I empathize with you, having been in that area, but I see the value in what they put forward, and I will be voting for the 26 foot.

Mayor Jake Woodford 58:32

Alder Meltzer.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 58:38

I also did want to point out that we do have the petition in our packet. There are 86 properties, and I counted 38 unique addresses. So even though the petition has a lot of signatures, I think that in the interest of fairness, we also need to consider those voices who are not represented on that petition. And I would urge my colleagues not to make a decision solely based on that petition. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:06

Alder Wolff.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 59:07

Thank you, Chair. I know a few people have mentioned the judgment of staff here, and I just want to point out that I in no way, shape, or form am saying that the judgment of staff is bad. I do think sometimes we have to share our thoughts with staff on certain projects, and sometimes we're going to disagree on things. What I will say is sometimes we also have to say no to certain projects, and it's also okay to do that. We don't always have to agree with staff in order to get things done in the city, and that's something to keep in mind here.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:49

All right. If there's no further discussion, we'll get on with the vote on the motion to amend by substitution, which has been made and seconded. There being no further discussion, please cast your votes. Hartzheim's aye. Motion passes nine to three. The item has been amended.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:00:20

We'll now open discussion on the item as amended. Alder Jones.

Alderson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:00:29

Thank you, Mayor. First, I think it's really important to thank the Oklahoma street neighbors for the initiative, for the persistence, and the willingness to engage in this process, as difficult as it has been. This has truly shown how much you care about your street, your neighborhood, and the—and your neighbors in your neighborhood.

Alderson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:00:54

I have been told that the constituents, many that are here tonight, are unhappy with me as their alderperson. They feel that I have not fought hard enough for their needs on the street, and feel underrepresented. It has also been kindly pointed out to me that 2026 is an election year for me, and if I don't work hard enough on this, there may be consequences, but I really need to say that I represent all the residents, and as I said in previous meetings, there has been an overwhelming amount of outreach on both sides of the issue. So while there are different priorities and different sides and different concerns, what I'm going to speak on tonight is probably not going to make anyone happy.

Alderson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:01:35

So that being acknowledged, I want to address with this process, changes potentially to be made. There was definitely a lack of dialog. There was a lot of—the neighbors wanted to be heard. They wanted to give the recommendations. And while a lot of them did reach out to city staff in calls and emails and the staff heard this, they didn't know they were being heard. They felt they were talking to a wall. There was a lot of misunderstanding about the public hearings being one sided. We also saw that again tonight, and so I think that this is a neighborhood that has ideas and passions and visions, and I really would like to encourage us to bring back those community conversations prior to the public hearing.

Alderson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:02:26

I had talked to staff. Cost of staff time, I think, is also something hidden that we miss. We had pulled—I think we pulled those meetings because of cost of staff time. However, the amount of time spent on the emails and questions and everything in the last two weeks, I think we can agree that having an initial meeting and getting that confusion out there and having this dialog is really important.

Alderson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:02:52

Also, I also want to acknowledge the side of the 75 years versus the constituents now. Yes, from a city perspective and a planning perspective, we have to look at 75 years. But I also need to point out that during the municipal services meeting, a petition was presented, and there was work and thought that went into that, and

it seemed very much to be not acknowledged, and to say—I felt it was said pretty forcefully, of essentially, "You don't matter now. What matters is 75 years, and you need to focus on that." And I really think that, yeah, that may be our focus, but people just want to be heard. This is their lives. This is them backing out of their driveway with Escalades on the street and they can't see, and there's children. And so, what I want on this to say is we really need to consider reinstating the community meeting so people are heard.

Alderson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:03:51

I think that Complete Streets is a good policy. However, I don't feel that it should be set in stone. I feel like as we move forward, as we work in downtown neighborhoods, as we work in different kinds of areas, we need to be able to look at, can things change? Can we try different things? Can we add? Can we—just to make it more of a potential living document than "Nope, it's this or nothing." I also encourage DPW to change their planning timeline. If we can move up some of these decisions and these meetings, we can have time so that any decisions like this don't affect ultimate bidding processes.

Alderson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:04:35

So, with that all to say, the constituents don't want this going through as it is. Because of all that, because of feeling unheard and having more discussions and more questions that need to be answered, I am going to vote no to complete the project.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:04:59

Alder Wolff.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:05:01

Thank you, Chair. I live in a district with two streets, Mason and Glendale, and this is on point with the audience kind of. So, when residents don't like a street, they're going to hold on to that for a long time. They have to look at it every single day, and that builds a certain level of mistrust of the city, feeling like the city doesn't listen to them, or doesn't care about them, and that builds a lot of resentment in their hearts, and then people don't feel like they're wanted there, so they move away. And you see these streets become the highest turnover streets in these districts.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:05:45

The reason I'm going to vote no against changing the road is because how many people said that they didn't want that plan. Again, it's not about disagreeing with staff. It is simply about knowing how residents feel on streets where they really didn't want that project to come to fruition. That's why I'll be voting against it, and I ask my colleagues to do the same.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:06:14

Alder Hayden.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:06:16

Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to take some time to echo everything Alder Jones said, because I've kind of seen this. I feel like every year, something comes before us where we kind of have issues. And I think for those of us who come to council every two weeks, and then the—in the weeks between, we come to committee meetings. This is just another Wednesday night for us. We understand how this works. We understand the policy. We understand what we can say, when we can talk, and who can talk when. For the people who are joining us, this is, might be the only time they join us. So, when they can talk, how they can interact with us, is all very confusing, and it's very difficult to deal with a situation that's changing your life when it's a very foreign concept. So, I think we need to take some time to recognize how we're engaging with the community when these

changes are coming before us, and get information from for earlier. I love everything you said, Alder Jones, and I appreciate the way that you're fighting for your for your constituents, but I would I would love to see us find ways to help engage with the community earlier, or else I think Appleton is losing a lot of a lot of the small town community that I think that we have here, that that that makes the city, the city something special. Thank you, Chair.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:07:38
Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:07:41

Thank you. I do want to thank all the neighbors for participating. I want to thank Alder Jones for her statements, and I want to echo very, very forcefully that we need to reinstate the community design hearings the way that they were happening before the pandemic. We need to move up the timelines of these meetings so that we aren't stuck in a position where we are running up against the bidding timeline for the project to happen.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:08:13

But that being said, I think that it is absolutely essential that this project go forward. The street is 100 years old. These water mains are very old. When infrastructure fails, the catastrophic impact that that can have on the people living there is much worse than the other impacts of the emotional level impacts of being unhappy or angry or influenced by these changes. I think that it would be irresponsible for us not to do the infrastructure work that needs to be done on the street. So, I think that this was definitely one of the most difficult decisions that I have had to make in my time on council. I have tried as hard as I can to be as thorough and as diligent and as fair and as far sighted as I can. So, I implore my colleagues to vote to move the project forward. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:09:24
Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:09:27

Thank you, Chair. Not to belabor this much longer, but I guess I would I would only add to that if we're looking towards the future and future planning, let's also look at staggering tree removal, if we know a project is on the way and that there are diseased trees—diseased trees that are, should come down or maybe coming down soon. Let's try to get on top of those sooner than later, so we can do a little bit more staggered removal and replanting before the project actually begins. I think that would help as we're looking at other neighborhoods have a lot of mature trees that are gonna have to come down at some point. So, I would just add that. Alder Wolff may have changed my mind on my vote, but I think I know which way it's gonna go. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:10:09
Alder Stancil-Martin.

Aldersperson Adrian Stancil-Martin (District 11) 1:10:10

I'm a member of the municipal services committee. I've had my eyes on this project for a while now. I've heard from the residents. I went to the block party, heard their concerns. I empathize with the residents and their frustration over not being heard and communicated. But I also agree with my colleagues that this isn't just about the difference in cost. This isn't even just about considering the state of the street, as my colleagues have mentioned, decades from now, a century from now. As Alder Meltzer has mentioned, these streets are a century old. If, God forbid, something were to happen to the infrastructure sooner than later because we did not address this soon, it will be affecting the current residents. We cannot continue to push this back. Thank you, Chair.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:11:20

Is there any other discussion? Hearing none, we have—did you have a question?

[Mayor Woodford speaks off microphone with City Clerk Amy Molitor.]

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:11:24

Okay, any further discussion? This is on the item as amended. Hearing none, please cast your votes. A little clean up here in Granicus. Stand by. Okay, you should be seeing your vote option now. Please cast your votes. Motion passes eight, four. The item's been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:12:18

Before we leave this item and move on with our agenda—so just to be clear, the item was amended to the 26-foot width with the recommendations that were originally presented to the municipal services committee, and that passed on an 8-4 vote just now. Before we leave this item, I want to take this opportunity to also thank the residents who've been engaged with this process, and I want to acknowledge the feedback that has been provided about the process and the way we gather input and provide a—provide, or in this case, didn't provide enough opportunity for dialog. And I appreciate that feedback, and I recognize it. And that is not an issue that requires action of Council, because that's not the prerogative of the council. That's prerogative of the administration. That's my responsibility. And so, I want to acknowledge that your expressions of our lack of dialog, not providing enough of those opportunities in in the neighborhood setting and in a group setting. Absolutely, I hear that. I acknowledge it, and it's something that we will, we will take to heart, and we will, we will work on with staff as we move forward with future reconstruction projects in the community.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:13:37

Sometimes timelines are driven by factors that that don't allow us to have detailed conversations too much earlier in this process. However, when we when we do have that information, and we have the opportunities in the time to create those spaces for dialog, we certainly what will work toward that.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:13:57

We'll also—I hear from a number of colleagues on the council that there's interest from alders in being a part of that neighborhood outreach and engaging with that. I'm going to trust that that's the case, because we will need help from the council, because the issues around staff, time and availability is very real, and so we will lean on our district representatives to help facilitate these kinds of conversations. But I see a willingness from this council to do that, and I appreciate that, and we will call on that. So again, want to thank the neighborhood for this feedback and acknowledge it and that we will work on this and make improvements as we move forward.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:14:41

The other thing I want to point out is, during the discussion there were comments made about agreement or disagreement with staff, and I want to make something clear which is that the role of staff and the executive branch is to bring forward recommendations that are aligned with the policies that the council itself has established. And so, when staff is presenting recommendations, in this case regarding Complete Streets, the—we are using the parameters that the Common Council has established for the design of streets in the city. So, these are not emotional recommendations from the staff or matters of personal feelings or opinions about what should be done. These are best efforts to execute on the policies, priorities, and the ordinances pertaining to a given project. So, I just want to make that clear, because I think that's important not only for our common council but for our community members to understand also, is that we're not operating from a place of "Well, we feel like this one ought to be 26 feet. And my personal opinion is that it ought to be 26 feet." That's not

where this recommendation came from. This was driven by execution on the policies that the council itself established in the past.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:04

And so, when staff is bringing forward recommendations developing plans, they're relying on their professional expertise to create those plans, and they'll bring forward recommendations so that the Common Council can make an informed decision about a project. But ultimately it is up to the Common Council, as our policy making body, as our legislative branch, to make final decisions, and to Alder Wolff's point, that that is the prerogative of the Common Council. But I want to make that clear and make sure we understand that that ultimately, when staff is bringing forward recommendations.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:40

Now, there may be adavance from time to time. This this may be not the best example of that. I think this was really more a matter of carrying out the Complete Streets policy, but there are times where professional best standards or ethical standards are going to contribute to the adavance of staff's recommendations or the positions that we take. But ultimately, the decisions come down to the Common Council, and so that's the way we work together on these projects. So, I wanted to acknowledge those two things.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:17:10

But again, I appreciate our residents from Oklahoma Street for your advocacy coming forward, and I can assure you that your input will shape the way we approach these projects in the future, certainly with respect to the ways that we engage with our neighbors because you have a beautiful neighborhood. I've been to your neighborhood; I've been your block party; and very much appreciate our Oklahoma street neighbors, and I thank you for your feedback and participation.